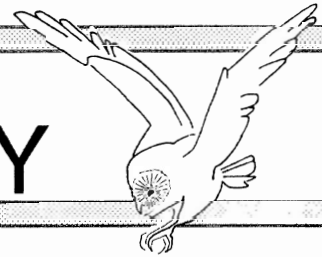


NATURALLY KENTUCKY



Number 4, November 1991

HOWARD RAYMOND ATHEY 1914 - 1991

By Marc Evans

On July 5, 1991 Kentucky lost Raymond Athey, a remarkable man who was recognized as the expert on the botany of western Kentucky. Much more than an expert botanist, Raymond was also a very successful, self-made businessman, as well as a husband and father.

Raymond was a self-taught botanist whose interest and contribution to our knowledge of Kentucky botany spans many decades. He freely gave of his accumulated knowledge to anyone who asked and he worked with many different government agencies, universities and individuals. He received an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Tennessee and was recognized by many organizations for his botanical contributions. The Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission recently honored him by naming an outstanding natural area he discovered the Raymond Athey Barrens State Nature Preserve. He established two funds for botanical research with the Kentucky Academy of Science and contributed money for other botanical and conservation purposes.

Calling Raymond self-taught is an understatement. Many years ago he told me, after much prodding, that he was somewhat embarrassed about his beginnings in botany. Finally though he told me that as a youngster, although interested in botany, he did not know where to start learning about plants. Someone who knew about his interest gave him a copy of Gray's Manual of Botany, but with no directions! He told me he thought it was a book you were supposed to read like a novel, and he proceeded to do so. He told me he read the book from cover to cover. (For those of you that don't know, Gray's manual is a technical botanical manual filled with dichotomous keys for identifying plants and thousands of technical descriptions of plants; hardly a book you read from cover to cover!) Needless to say he was a very frustrated young man and it took "a very long time to figure out how to use the book."

The first time I had the pleasure of meeting Raymond Athey, in 1977, I was an undergraduate student



in botany at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Dr. Robert Mohlenbrock, professor of botany and then chairman of the Botany department, introduced me to Raymond as the man who knew more about the plants and natural history of western Kentucky than anyone else in the world. I remember that day well because I was so impressed and thrilled to have finally met the man Dr. Mohlenbrock so often spoke about in glowing terms. Raymond took me and several other botany students out to lunch and told us amazing stories about botanizing in western Kentucky and elsewhere in the world. It was then that I first heard him use the expression that I was to become so familiar with in the years to come. He spoke about "carrying" Dr. Mohlenbrock to see some rare plants and "carrying" others to see this or that. At first I envisioned Raymond with Dr. Mohlenbrock upon his back trudging through some cypress swamp or up some cliff to look at plants! Of course later I too got the privilege of being "carried" many times by Raymond to see various things around Kentucky.

I will miss Raymond very much. Besides being a great botanist who taught me much about Kentucky, he was also a kind and humble man with a dry humor who was always willing to help people in any way that he could. July 5th was indeed a sad day for me and all others who were touched by his kindness and generosity.

Volunteers In Action

As the end of the year approaches, the Stewardship program can look back on its most successful year of preserve management. Our small staff was augmented this year by an 11-month seasonal position and two summer co-op students. Cindy Campbell has been working since January as the Commission's Stewardship Assistant. She has been developing our volunteer base and assisting with the supervision of our preserve work crew. Linda Marcum, a senior at Morehead State University, and Jason Steussel, a senior from Murray State University, put in a long, hot summer's worth of work on eight of our preserves. Even with this boost, the Stewardship program finds volunteer contributions of time and services invaluable. The Commission would like to thank those individuals and organizations that gave a helping hand in the improvement and upgrading of several state nature preserves this year.

This past spring, visitors to Logan County Glade State Nature Preserve in Russellville were able to experience a limestone glade abundant with native grasses and wildflowers and hike a loop trail through the woods to the top of the knob. Dustin Calery, an Eagle Scout candidate, and Boy Scouts from troops 303 and 58 worked hard to open the glade area and spent many hours this past winter building the trail. Wood chips that were spread on the trail were provided by the Logan County Electric Plant Board. Special recognition also goes to John Majors, a student at Murray State, for volunteering his time to maintain the brand new trail.

We wish to express our appreciation to Mrs. Wava Grandon and her students at Heath Elementary for removing litter from Metropolis Lake State Nature Preserve during a clean-up day earlier this year. Mrs. Grandon, her students, and interested parents will be developing a loop trail at the preserve in the coming months. Many thanks to Wava, Brian Jordan, Mike Jordan, Ron Jordan, Chuck Jordan, Jackie Staples, and Katie Qualls for coming out on a rainy April day to help plan the trail's course. Additional thanks go to Martin Marietta Energy Systems for their gift of \$1,000.00. This generous donation will be used to construct an elevated boardwalk through the floodplain portion of the new trail. Directional signs donated by Allen Seabaugh, manager of the Tennessee Valley Authority's Shawnee Fossil Plant, will guide preserve visitors on this scenic trail once it is completed.

The banks of Six Mile Island State Nature Preserve are sprouting with new vegetation thanks to Bill Lancaster and his crew of volunteers and their willow planting forays to the island. Commission staff members also spent a day on the island this spring planting willows as part of the three year bank stabilization project being conducted by the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission and the Ohio River advocacy group, Riverfields Inc. of Louisville.

This spring, approximately thirty tires were removed from Flat Rock Glade State Nature Preserve by Commission staff and delivered to Simpson County Good-year Tire in Franklin. The Commission appreciates the generous act of store manager Steve Farley who accepted the tires to be stockpiled with his own for recycling.

We would also like to thank the employees of Ashland Oil for their generous donation of \$1,367.51, representing funds from their recycling efforts. In accordance with their wishes, this money will be used on the Jesse Stuart State Nature Preserve. The Commission and the Jesse Stuart Foundation will use these funds to develop an environmental education curriculum that combines Stuart's writings with the preserve's natural settings.

As the state nature preserve system continues to grow so does our need for volunteer support to implement various management projects on the preserves. Our Stewardship program has projects planned for several of the preserves this winter. There are numerous opportunities for volunteers to lend their time and talents on weekdays and weekends.

In addition to our volunteer needs for specific projects, we are looking for Preserve Monitors who will hold specialized volunteer positions. Preserve Monitors will be knowledgeable of the Commission's rules and regulations governing preserve activities and responsible for being the Commission's "eyes and ears" at their designated state nature preserve. The monitor will frequently inspect the preserve, report any problems encountered on a timely basis and work with the Commission Stewardship staff to correct them. The Preserve Monitor will also serve as a liaison between the Commission and local preserve volunteers by recruiting and coordinating volunteer activities for specific work projects held at the preserve. Preserve Monitors are needed at many of the state nature preserves.

Volunteers In Action

The benefits of volunteering your time and skills to help on a state nature preserve are numerous. If you are interested in volunteer positions or would like more information, please contact Cindy Campbell at (502) 564-2886 or return the completed form below.

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION REQUEST FORM

Name _____

Phone (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

PLEASE RETURN TO:

CINDY CAMPBELL, VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR
KENTUCKY STATE NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION
407 BROADWAY
FRANKFORT, KY 40601

COMMISSION ACQUISITION OF CHANEY LAKE FINAL

This summer the Commission acquired Chaney Lake, making it our 24th Preserve and the first in Warren County. With assistance from the Kentucky Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, the Commission purchased more than 160 acres of this wonderful aquatic resource. Chaney Lake is one of two "transient" lakes near Woodburn in southern Warren County that are legendary for the astounding abundance and variety of waterbirds they have attracted over the years. They are called "transient" lakes because water usually covers them for only a portion of the year.

A unique set of circumstances is responsible for the presence of these transient lakes. The entire region is underlain by porous limestone, and there is virtually no surface drainage. For much of the year, Chaney Lake may be just a broad, bowl-like depression in the land that is covered by forest and agricultural crops. But subsequent to heavy rainfall, especially in late winter or spring when the groundwater level is usually at its highest, this depression fills with water from surrounding springs. The water level may rise for several weeks after heavy rains as the springs continue to flow. Then, it may take several months for the lake to disappear because the water has nowhere to drain as long as the water table remains high. During 1989, for example, Chaney Lake held water from early January through mid-October.

Birdwatchers have flocked to the transient lakes for many years, especially in springtime when migrant waterfowl and shorebirds are abundant. Four species of herons and egrets, 19 species of waterfowl, and 20 species of shorebirds were seen at the lake in 1989. Some of the migrant birds remain into summer to nest. Dr. Gordon Wilson, a long-time professor at Western Kentucky University, documented several rare nestings at the transient lakes from the 1930s through the early 1950s including the American coot, Pied-billed grebe and Blue-winged teal. The latter two species nested at Chaney Lake in 1991.

Unusual birdlife is not all that caused the Commission to acquire Chaney Lake. It is believed that periodic flooding and fire formerly combined to keep much of the surrounding land in wet prairie vegetation. Even today, despite intensive farming, wetland vegetation dominates portions of the lake left undisturbed for even a short period of time. A rare quillwort, *Isoetes melanopoda*, grows in abundance on exposed flats surrounding the receding lake shores in summer. Before long, the Commission will begin managing Chaney Lake to simulate the presettlement conditions, which should greatly benefit both the birds and the vegetation.

New Rare Species List

Commission biologists recently updated the list of plant and animal species considered endangered, threatened, or of special concern in Kentucky. Species on this list are monitored by the Commission's Kentucky Natural Heritage Program; data from the Natural Heritage Program are available to scientists, governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and private businesses for research and land-use planning. This new list, which replaces the Kentucky Academy of Science-Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission list published in 1986 (Warren et al), is the best available compilation of rare species in the Commonwealth.

The process by which the rare species list is updated is continuous and relies primarily on data gathered and stored by the Natural Heritage Program. Data is fed into the Natural Heritage Program by Commission biologists, biologists from other governmental agencies, university researchers, and amateur field biologists. Annual updates to the list are planned. Contributions from all biologists are encouraged.

Of the 554 species, subspecies, and varieties on the new list, 330 are plants, 159 are vertebrates, and 65 are invertebrates. Taxa considered endangered total 298 (197 plants, 60 vertebrates, and 41 invertebrates), those considered threatened total 117

(70 plants, 32 vertebrates, and 15 invertebrates), and those of special concern total 139 (63 plants, 67 vertebrates, and 9 invertebrates). Taxa considered endangered are believed to be in danger of extirpation and/or extinction in Kentucky, and those considered threatened are likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future. Special concern taxa are monitored because of a variety of special factors but are not thought to be as imperiled as those in the first two categories.

Species and subspecies presumed extinct or extirpated from Kentucky have been put on a separate list. Fifteen invertebrate and 18 vertebrate taxa are on this list.

Because Kentucky has no law providing for the listing and protection of endangered species, this list has no impact on the promulgation and enforcement of state environmental regulations. State-listed taxa also on the federal endangered and threatened species list are provided some protection under federal law. The addition of an endangered species act to Kentucky statutes would be a major advance toward ensuring that present and future generations will be able to enjoy the Commonwealth's biodiversity.

New Commission Staff Members

Deborah White was added to the Nature Preserves Commission

staff last spring. As a staff botanist, she will be reviewing the Kentucky flora for potentially rare plants and gathering background information on their present status in the state. The plants that are found to be rare will be monitored through the Natural Heritage database and targeted for protection. She has a M.S. in Botany from the University of Florida and a broad background in natural resource protection.

Cindy Campbell joined our staff in January as the Commission's stewardship assistant. She has been a welcome addition to our stewardship program as she is responsible for helping with the management of all 24 state nature preserves. She has been instrumental in revitalizing the Commission's volunteer program. Cindy recently graduated from Georgetown College where she earned her B.S. in Environmental Science.

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